

## STORIES OF THE TOWN

## PECULIAR TYPES COME UNDER A REPORTER'S EAGLE EYE.

## A Colored Rag-Time Piano Player and His Art—The Brick Man's Doleful Song—Another Story.

"Well, I cert'nly didn't know yo' when yo' first come in; I sh'ldn't recognize yo' dahn brown skin."

That is the way the refrain goes, and the little black man that sings it curls his thin lips around the old worn-out piano stool as he leans over the dirty ivory keys of the loose-jointed, tin-panny instrument and how his skinny fingers fly over the keyboard in an avalanche of ragtime; how his eyes shine as he discusses in rhyme and melody the romance of a "dusky pair of lovers in the sunny South," how he does enjoy it all!

He is well worth knowing, for he is quite a genius in his line. He says that he is all wrapped up in his music, and after observing him at his work one can easily believe it. He compels attention on account of his originality and versatility. Unlike most barroom pianists, he scorns cigarettes and wine distinction with enormous black cigars from which he extracts tremendous clouds of sooty smoke that bring to mind a locomotive full of soft coal. He can get more smoke out of a cigar than anybody that ever lived, he says so himself. He does not care particularly for the glasses of beer which enthusiastic admirers insist upon donating to him, but drinks what is thrust upon him merely to keep from offending anybody. All he wants is to be left alone there at the piano—to be permitted to exist in that musical world of his own—to be allowed to smoke out some of the music that's inside of him, as he will tell you, soberly, his big eyes agleam with musical fervor.

The little "music room" in which he presides is an upstairs apartment over a saloon on Indiana avenue near the canal. The little black man sings and plays and plays and sings, and never seems to become tired. Sometimes he leaves the piano long enough to do a buck and wing dance "when de music gets down into his feet." Knowing nothing of the literature of music, of its technicalities or its "grammar," he instinctively appreciates its possibilities and does all that he can in his own untaught, uneducated way to give his thoughts and his emotions a musical interpretation. He "makes up" many of his songs and nearly all of his dance music. He is a distinct type of the musical American negro—musical in spite of everything.

If you happen to live on St. Clair street, one of the few thoroughfares of the city that extends almost entirely across the town from east to west, you have probably heard from day to day, during the long hours of these summer afternoons, the melancholy songs of "the man on the brick wagon," as he is coming to be known. If Charles Dickens were alive to-day, and here in Indianapolis, he would doubtless shed tears of joy upon the man on the brick wagon. Dick Swiveller at his worst never played such frightfully morbid tunes on his melancholy flute as the man on the brick wagon sings while taking his daily load of bricks across the town. The residents along the street have had the blues for the last three weeks and one man—a night watchman who is at home during the day—has been causing his friends much worry lately with his distressingly gloomy views of life.

There can be no doubt of one thing—the man on the brick wagon possesses a ghastly imagination, which he does not pretend to suppress in any way. On the contrary, he allows it carte-blanche—gives it permission to go ahead and play itself to the limit. It is to be hoped that it will eventually wind up its career by doing the one thing in keeping with its character—commit suicide. The man on the brick wagon loves to think that his heavy wagon is a gigantic hearse and that each brick is a corpse. He bends over his reins with an expression of complete hopelessness on his face and with a series of improvised funeral marches that are almost unbearable. You can tell that he composes them as he goes along, for he never renders the same selection twice, and it is beyond belief that any one could have deliberately memorized such a repertoire of sorrowful compositions.

One sympathetic woman, after listening to the music with a heavy heart, ventured the opinion that the man on the brick wagon was terribly unhappy—that his wife had perhaps been made miserable by misfortune, and she was not content until she had asked her husband to find out from the brick man just what the trouble was. The husband at first refused to do anything of the kind, but noticing that his life took the matter so much to heart, he finally consented to make the inquiry. And he did. Upon being asked "if he sang those funeral marches on account of unhappiness," the man on the brick wagon reined in his horses, surveyed the poor husband with a critical and sarcastic eye, and then answered briefly but expressively. He said: "Hell, no!"

At the opening of the summer racing season, a tall, heavy-set man was found sitting on a bench in a corner of a poolroom which Indianapolis boasts, and when the last telegraphic report brings in the news of the day, he is usually the first to declare emphatically that "such-and-such a horse can't possible lose," and then, when the horse that he has picked as a winner comes in far behind the others (for the best of race followers make mistakes), he goes back to his old seat in the corner, crosses his legs, and remarks with firm conviction "that it couldn't happen that way again in a hundred years."

She is tall and angular and somewhat severe of countenance—the woman that sells handkerchiefs in saloons. One man, who was somewhat the worse for persistent association with Scotch high-balls, thought she was an understudy of the celebrated Carrie Nation, and started out the back door of the barroom in a hurry when she came stalking in through the swinging doors at the front entrance. She isn't at all backward about introducing herself to a crowd of men, nor is she in any way immodest. She is simply all business, she insists that her handkerchiefs are worth a cent each and that no man can afford to let such a bargain slip by. Women handkerchief sellers that ply their trade among men are common enough in the large Eastern cities, but this one is the first that has given the thing a trial in Indianapolis. She says that it is easier to deal with men than with women and that, for her part, she would rather walk boldly into a crowd of men and offer her wares than take chances among those of her own sex. The night of the last prize fight at the Empire Theater, when Wabash street from Pennsylvania to Delaware was thronged with the city's sporting element she was right in the thick of the crowd, the only woman in sight, going about her business in a very matter-of-fact manner indeed. She evidently has some ideas of her own and is not afraid to carry them out.

## NEWS OF THE THEATERS

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## THE JOURNAL'S POETS.

## To the Prairies.

There's majesty rises in cloud-piercing mountain,  
There's a deep brooding calm in the ocean and lake,  
There's promise of love in the fast-flowing fountain,  
And best the emotions that each of them wake.

But the prairies, more fruitful than mountain or sea,  
Give strength unto man with perennial youth,  
They are free, they are free,  
And they call unto thee.

In the life-giving language of primitive truth,  
Peace dwells in their calmness, hope sounds through their message.

In the valley is rest from the storm on the hill;  
In each golden harvest good fortune has presage,  
Here dwells the ripe promise of infinite Will,  
Man works in full confidence, knowing the end.

Will reply with abundance his long day of toil,  
He has heart to defend  
From the ill the fates send  
A home on the prairie's rich, beautiful soil.

Then here to the prairies! May summer caress them,  
The wind as it wanders be soothing as wine;  
May the laws of our country continue to bless them,  
And long may their boundaries pleasure define.

We love them, we love them, the prairies divine,  
With their peace and their plenty, their home-coming call.  
They are yours, they are mine,  
Let the wide world rejoice,  
God reigns in their heavens, and there's room for us all.

—Charles W. Stevenson,  
Warrensburg, Mo.

## The Borderland.

(That thin partition which divides old age from newness of life.)

Gray, twilight-time—  
Thou borderland of that vast ocean life!  
Whose shores encircle a continuous strife,  
With storms and winds and waves and waves and waves.

With slow and faltering steps life's pilgrims reach  
The changeless margin of the wreck-strewn beach  
Where pale, wet, wordless lips, and eyes beseech  
The help the Master gave.

He guides their feet  
To mountains beautiful though pitched so steep  
That they who would ascend must trustful keep  
Firm hold on unseen hand;

Till reaching a far, dizzying resting place,  
With outstretched arms and lifted eyes they trace  
A white cut upon the mountain's face,  
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Who, gazing through that opening cleft so high,  
Can catch a glimpse of the world's rocky sky  
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And turning from this life's beguiling years,  
Whose air is plain as childhood's tears,  
May enter on its road of heavenly spheres  
Through death's all-cancelling bond.

Indianapolis, July, 1902.

## Bird of the South.

Bird of the South, my distant South,  
Thy plumage was long;  
Thy note of longing from the pine, like,  
Have known thy wayward song.

These border groves have sheltered thee  
Each night thy journey through;  
Still can it be, to that far land,  
Thy heart, like mine, is true?

Broad may these northern meadows stretch,  
The iris the only flower  
That blows for thee and me,  
And if, some silent night, there comes  
Across the sleeping land,  
Thy note of longing from the trees,  
There's one will understand.

Bird of the South, when summer time  
Hath broke her golden spell,  
When on the wind thy homeward bound,  
Exultant song shall swell,  
Will carry to my South, for me,  
One little song apart.

And sing it in the jasmine, low  
Above her listening heart? —Jessie St. John,  
Marion, Ind.

## Andre.

Is this his end? The scientist so bold,  
Who would on gaseous courses of the sky  
Across the polar regions farthest fly?  
Alighting in the North King's icy hold,  
By chance quick turned from a rifle rolled.  
The natives at the sound, with hostile cry,  
Upon the party spring, who, fighting die,  
And leave the story of the pole untold.  
What agony was his when he surveyed  
These fierce barbarians thirsting for his blood!

He, who so carefully his plans had laid,  
Whose brute fury helpless, helpless stood,  
Whose braids of unaccomplished purpose rose,  
And rendered trebly sharp death's bitter blow!

—Clarence J. Bulett,  
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## Purchased by George Gould.

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Aug. 2.—Fifty-five per cent. of the stock of the Union Railway company of this city was sold to-day to George Gould, president of the Missouri Pacific Railway, for \$18,000, giving him control of the proposed belt line.

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To-morrow morning at 8 o'clock we inaugurate an extraordinary Sale of Manufacturers' Sample Beds (one only of each pattern) at manufacturers' prices—an event which marks the lowest prices of the year, an actual saving to you of one-third. A sale of sample beds, finished better, made with more care than regular stock, representing the very latest and neatest designs from one of the largest and best known metal concerns in the country. Over 100 patterns to select from, all in the new finishes—Vernis Marten, Antique Copper, Ivory and Gold, Black and Gold, bright or dull finishes. Quality, as always with us, the very finest. We quote only a few prices here to show the importance of this event to anyone expecting to buy a metal bed this week.

\$27.50 buys the SANDER & RECKER SPECIAL, a very massive, elegant BRASS BED, heavy 2-inch pillars; quality the very finest; in fact, guaranteed to you in every respect, a bed others ask \$40.00 for, and worth it, too. Sale price \$27.50.

Same Bed precisely, with 1½-inch posts, instead of 2-inch, worth \$32.00. Sale price.....\$22.50

One very fine SAMPLE BED, latest style, regular price \$85.00. Sample sale.....\$48.00

One very elegant Brass Bed, newest style, regular price \$70.00. Sample sale.....\$52.00

Choice of four patterns, each one different in design (worth fully one-third more). Sample sale.....\$32.50

Ten of the very finest Iron Beds made (no two alike in style or finish), priced regularly up to \$32.00. Sample price.....\$22.50

Eight of the neatest designs in our stock (no two alike), priced regularly up to \$26.00. Sample sale.....\$16.50

Choice of twelve Beds made to sell up to \$18.00 regular. Sale price.....\$12.50

\$11.00, \$12.00 and \$13.00 Beds go at.....\$9.50

\$7.00 and \$8.00 Iron Beds, latest styles, all colors, at.....\$5.95

\$4.00 and \$4.50 Beds go at.....\$2.95

Beds bought during this sale will be large for future delivery. We advise you to call early, as the best values will go first, and no pattern can be duplicated at these prices.

Bed Springs and Mattresses at SPECIAL REDUCTIONS during this sale.

ODD DRESSERS, CHIFFONIERES and TOILET TABLES to go with these fine Beds at GREATLY REDUCED PRICES, notwithstanding that all prices have been greatly advanced by the manufacturers.

## SANDER &amp; RECKER FURNITURE CO.

219-221-223 E. Washington St.—Directly Opposite Courthouse.

Agents for the Celebrated Globe-Wernicke Elastic Bookcases. Members Merchants' Association.

## HAIR REQUIRES AID

in its battle against DANDRUFF, FALLING HAIR and ITCHING SCALP. If no aid, soon no hair.